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Chairman : Mr. Balarezo ..... (Peru)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 39: Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance *(continued)* (A/C.2/59/L.29, A/C.2/59/L.33, A/C.2/59/L.36, A/C.2/59/L.37, A/C.2/59/L.39 and A/C.2/59/L.40)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions *(continued)*

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.29: Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

1. **Ms. Booto** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that her delegation withdrew the draft resolution for technical reasons, but reserved the right to introduce a draft resolution on the same issue at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.29 was withdrawn.

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.39: Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for Ethiopia

2. **Mr. Zenna** (Ethiopia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that it was an updated version of the text adopted on the same issue in the previous year. With help from its partners, Ethiopia could certainly be able to stop depending on food aid within three to five years. The speaker encouraged Member States that had not yet sponsored the draft resolution to do so.

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.36: Humanitarian assistance to Serbia and Montenegro

3. **Ms. Ivanovic** (Serbia and Montenegro), introducing the draft resolution, announced that Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Romania had become sponsors. She recalled that the crisis in former Yugoslavia had crippled her country and that inherited problems undermined efforts to implement economic reforms. To accelerate the reform process, her country needed the international community's assistance. She therefore appealed to the international community and urged it to support the Government of Serbia and Montenegro's efforts to ensure a smooth transition from a state requiring emergency humanitarian relief to long-term rehabilitation and development.

4. In view of the burden - unparalleled in Europe - of 350,000 refugees and 230,000 displaced persons on the territory of Serbia and Montenegro, it was vital that the Member States, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should provide her country with financial assistance and encourage development assistance activities to facilitate the implementation of the national strategy for the solution of problems related to refugees and displaced persons, the national poverty reduction strategy and other programmes aimed at meeting the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population. Serbia and Montenegro also hoped to receive help in that area from the United Nations system and was ready to further cooperate with its bodies. It called upon the United Nations and its specialized agencies to continue to provide it with assistance in pursuing the reform process, revitalizing its economy and solving sustainably the problems of those most severely affected. The speaker hoped that a consensus would be reached on the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.33: Assistance for Mozambique

5. **The Chairman** announced that Egypt had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

6. **Mr. Grey-Johnson** (Gambia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of African States, announced that Brazil, Cameroon, Cuba, Jamaica, Mauritius, Senegal and Uganda had also become sponsors. The draft reviewed the progress accomplished in two years by Mozambique in the area of development, updated General Assembly resolution 57/104 on the same issue, underscoring its humanitarian aspects, identified the main political, economic and social problems faced by the country, and outlined an adequate legal and political framework for providing Mozambique with cooperation and assistance. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on assistance for Mozambique, the speaker recalled that his country was exposed to frequent natural disasters that caused considerable damage and hindered economic growth. That situation, compounded by

HIV/AIDS, contributed to food insecurity. HIV/AIDS affected the most productive population groups and its impact on economic and social development was devastating. The combined effect of HIV/AIDS and natural disasters had been to heighten the vulnerability of the population, which consequently still needed humanitarian assistance. In view of the interrelation of humanitarian problems, it was necessary to combat the pandemic in a comprehensive manner and, to that end, integrate development into humanitarian activities, over and above emergency relief. To be effective, any assistance programme should promote the transition from a state necessitating relief to the stage of development, because only development could end vulnerability and dependence. The Government was currently implementing a national plan against absolute poverty and national development plans with a view to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reducing poverty, building capacities in the area of governance and attenuating vulnerability.

Agenda item 91: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources *(continued)* (A/C.2/59/L.41)

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.41: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

7. **Mr. Elfarnawany** (Egypt) expressed regret that his delegation was once again obliged to introduce such a draft resolution, because - despite the adoption of a similar draft resolution every year - the Palestinian people still suffered and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was deteriorating as a result of the continuing illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territory. The permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources was still not enforced. The draft resolution built on the General Assembly resolution adopted at the previous session. The speaker stressed the need to recognize that the territory of the Palestinian people was still occupied and an occupying power continued to exploit its natural resources. It was therefore extremely difficult for the Palestinian people to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the other objectives that had been set in the major conferences and Summits organized under United Nations auspices. The speaker introduced the draft resolution as a modest contribution to the goals of the Palestinian people's development and its permanent sovereignty over its natural resources. Since there had been no progress in that direction, it was important that the Committee and the General Assembly should send a strong signal affirming that that situation was not acceptable.

8. **Mr. Rojas** (Chile) said that the Spanish version of draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.41 had been distributed as a Security Council document and asked the Secretariat to take additional precautions to avoid such errors.

Agenda item 88: Groups of countries in special situations *(continued)*

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries *(continued)* (A/C.2/59/L.42)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation *(continued)* (A/C.2/59/L.43)

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.42: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.43: Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

9. **Mr. Al-Mahmoud** (Qatar) introduced both resolutions on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He expressed the hope that draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.42 would be adopted by consensus. Referring to draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.43, he underscored its main points and asked the Member States to support it.

Agenda item 92: Training and research *(continued)*

(b) United Nations University *(continued)* (A/C.2/59/L.35)

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.35: United Nations University

10. **Mr. Sunaga** (Japan), introducing the draft resolution, announced that the sponsors of the draft resolution no longer included Algeria, but had been joined by Kazakhstan and Venezuela. Referring to the text, the speaker said that Japan, while applauding the work of the United Nations University (UNU), had made a number of recommendations intended to allow it to carry out its mission more effectively. UNU's activities deserved greater visibility, and the possibilities of cooperation with it should be enhanced. Moreover, the links and communication between UNU and other United Nations agencies should be strengthened and UNU's partners should be encouraged to take full advantage of its capabilities. The international community was invited to make voluntary contributions to ensure the effectiveness of the activities of the University. Furthermore, the University should contribute to the international community's progress in the areas of education and capacity building by disseminating the results of its activities and offering better education opportunities, especially to young researchers from developing countries. UNU, however, enjoyed limited publicity and media coverage and as a result its work was not sufficiently recognized. The speaker pointed out that, in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, the words "and countries in transition" should be inserted after "developing countries" and, in paragraph 4, "Germany" should be inserted after "Bonn".

Draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.37: International assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola

11. **Ms. Izata** (Angola) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors. As Angola was following the difficult road to national reconciliation and reconstruction, the text aimed at reaffirming the need for partnerships between its Government and the international community. The speaker noted with concern the inadequate level of international assistance granted to Angola since the coming of peace and recalled that the Round-Table Conference of Donors, held in Brussels in 1999, had not achieved the mobilization of the necessary funds. She recalled the urgent need to support and strengthen national and international initiatives encompassing humanitarian mine-action activities, the resettlement of internally displaced persons and the return of refugees, and the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants, in order to help Angola to tackle the social, economic and humanitarian crises that it faced. The text recognized the efforts made by the Government to carry out its economic development programme and improve governance, transparency and accountability in the management of public resources. In paragraph 14 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly expressed its profound gratitude to donors and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes for the substantial assistance provided to Angola in the implementation of its economic development programme.

Agenda item 44: Information and communication technologies for development (A/59/563, A/59/80-E/2004/61, A/59/80/Corr.1-E/2004/61/Corr.1, A/59/207 and A/C.2/59/3)

Agenda item 44: Information and communication technologies *(continued)* (A/59/563; A/59/80 E/2004/61 and Corr.1; A/59/207; and A/C.2/59/3)

Agenda item 92: Training and research *(continued)*

(a) United Nations Institute for Training and Research (A/59/14 (Supplement No. 14) and A/59/230)

(b) United Nations University *(continued)* (A/59/31 (Supplement No. 31) and A/59/566)

12. **Mr. Subedi** (Nepal) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The phenomenon of globalization was not limited to the increase of capital flows and trade, but also involved cross-border information and communication flows.

13. The importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development and the technological gap between countries were growing continuously. ICTs remained a mirage to millions of people whose essential needs went unsatisfied. Nepal realized that those technologies were conducive to establishing an information society and, thereby, attaining the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs). Clearly, however, the digital divide was becoming deeper within and between countries. Many countries lacked access to both information and ICTs. Ironically, while globalization spread, the poor were increasingly marginalized in relation to information and economic development. The free, fair and open access of the population of developing countries to information and to ICTs was a human development challenge. The opportunities offered by those technologies should be exploited and their multidimensional benefits redistributed to the developing countries and societies.

14. ICTs contributed to the generation of enormous new opportunities for employment and, therefore, economic growth and sustainable development. Trade, commerce, industry and the economies were becoming increasingly dependent on ICTs. Coordinated and specific measures should be taken to ensure that the people in developing countries had free and fair access to the world of advanced communications and information.

15. Next to the division between the haves and have-nots, which was still the greatest challenge facing humanity, a new challenge had emerged in the form of the digital divide and the ICTs. Efforts were needed to bridge the divide between ICT-advanced and ICT-developing countries.

16. ICTs had high priority in the national policies of Nepal. Under the country's ongoing tenth development plan, the private sector and civil society were encouraged to promote and develop those technologies. The Government had committed itself to building the necessary infrastructure in that sector. Training in those technologies had been introduced in the schools, colleges and universities.

17. Nepal welcomed the activities undertaken by the regional commissions in the ICT sector, particularly in relation to job creation, capacity building and electronic commerce. It also applauded Tunisia's initiative to host the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2005, and hoped that WSIS would provide an opportunity to adopt measures favourable to the development of ICTs and to analyze their crucial role in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The United Nations could play a major role in the development of ICTs and ensure that they became accessible to the developing countries.

18. **Mr. Pisarevich** (Belarus), speaking on agenda item 44, stressed the importance of the outcomes of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva in 2003. All stakeholders - Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), representatives of civil society and the private sector - had participated in that process, providing it with actual global significance. The measures taken as part of the follow-up to the WSIS decisions would certainly contribute to promoting the attainment of the goals of the Millennium Declaration worldwide. With regard to the question of the goals of the second phase of WSIS, scheduled be held in Tunis in 2005, it was appropriate to stress the importance of the follow-up to the decisions of the Heads of State and Government enunciated in the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted in Geneva. It was essential to take specific steps to implement those decisions, particularly in relation to Internet governance and the establishment of funding mechanisms. The solution of those problems should be given priority in the second and third meetings of the WSIS Preparatory Committee. Belarus endorsed the work on the formulation of national information-processing strategies and regional and sub-regional strategies. Without adequate financing or funding mechanisms, however, those strategies would be inapplicable.

19. Assessing progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted in Geneva constituted an important task. In that connection, it would be appropriate to pursue the development of monitoring indicators that could be useful in determining advancements in using ICTs.

20. Data exchange on national initiatives undertaken in the area of ICT development, and the various partnership programmes, would certainly contribute to reducing the digital divide between developed and developing countries. In that context, it might be useful to promote the implementation of a scheme proposed by Belarus in Geneva, whereby software developers selling their products to developing countries at preferential rates would be compensated from a special fund set up under United Nations auspices.

21. Regarding the issues related to the structure of the preparatory process leading to the second phase of WSIS in Tunis, it would be appropriate to organize regional meetings and seminars on the implementation of the decisions contained in the Declaration of

Principles and Plan of Action adopted in Geneva. Belarus had contributed to that process through the recent organization in Minsk of an international conference on ICTs and law.

22. **Mr. Sunaga** (Japan) said that his country had been a strong supporter of the United Nations University (UNU) from its establishment in 1975. As UNU prepared to commemorate its thirtieth anniversary in 2005, Japan believed more strongly than ever in the value of its work. In addressing such pressing concerns as the environment, sustainable development and conflicts and security, UNU had sought to find solutions to some of the most difficult challenges facing the international community.

23. UNU focused its activities on two broad programme areas - peace and governance, and environment and sustainable development. To make a significant contribution in those areas, it had intensified its efforts to establish intellectual networks with other institutions and universities and to strengthen its cooperation with other United Nations agencies.

24. UNU had provided support to the population, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in the form of capacity building and scholarships. In that regard, the speaker applauded the new Global Virtual University (GVU) initiative, undertaken under UNU auspices. GVU was a network University providing students worldwide with an online learning programme on development and the environment. Universities from African countries such as Ghana, Uganda and South Africa participated in that network, which encouraged cooperation among partner universities around the world to help more students to engage in e-learning.

25. Further promotion of those activities required not only relevant efforts by UNU itself, but also the interest of, and invigoration by, the Member States. Strong partnerships between UNU and Member States would enable the University to exchange ideas and receive intellectual stimulation. Such relationships could lead to the organization of new courses and research on issues related to the current needs of the peoples of the world.

26. **Mr. Essel** (Ghana), referring to agenda item 92 (b), said that the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (INRA), located in Accra, Ghana, was one of 13 institutes set up by the United Nations University (UNU). Its mission was to build indigenous capacities in Africa and to enhance the ability of African universities and research institutions to develop, adapt and disseminate technologies aimed at promoting the efficient use of the continent's natural resources for sustainable development. Those activities were anchored to the following five main planks: strengthening cooperation with African scientists through networking with African research institutes and through strategic partnerships with organizations such as FAO; developing or strengthening postgraduate programmes in African universities; studying the role of African women in natural resources management in recognition of their status as the main custodians of indigenous knowledge in natural resource conservation and management; engaging the African Diaspora in INRA activities through the African Millennium Initiative for Science and Technology (AMIST), a networking mechanism helping to bridge the knowledge gap between African diaspora scientists and academicians and their home-based counterparts; and making timely and relevant information available to African policy-makers through INRA annual lectures. The latter, organized in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), had made INRA a focal institution for attracting renowned scholars from around the world to share information with, and provide policy guidance to, African policy-makers in the areas of natural resources and the environment.

27. The major constraint on the implementation of INRA programmes was inadequate funding. In the 2004-2005 biennium, the Institute's annual budget was less than US $700,000, making INRA the most scantily funded of the 13 UNU institutes. It was necessary to remedy that situation. According to the Director of INRA, nothing short of doubling the current INRA budget could bring the Institute anywhere close to fulfilling its mission.

28. Regrettably, total Member States contributions received in 2003 - a paltry US$10,660,670 from only 15 countries - were abysmally low, perhaps because of inadequate publicity about UNU activities. Whatever the reason, additional resources were undeniably necessary.

29. Some modest satisfaction could be drawn from the fact that, according to information provided the Director of INRA, Ghana had so far paid nearly US$3 million out of US$5 million pledged in 1994 by the

Ghanaian Government to the INRA Endowment Fund. The speaker called on all Member States to contribute generously to the budget of INRA to enable it to fulfil its mission.

30. **Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and stated that, through their openness and by reducing distances in space and time and building capacities for dialogue, the new technologies of information and communication (ICTs) constituted an effective tool of political, administrative, economic and local governance.

31. Although electronic mail did not replace vaccines and satellites did not supply poor villages with drinking water, the new technologies increased existing capabilities considerably and helped to draw up estimates that made it possible to prepare better responses to emergency situations that the poor could face.

32. In the developing countries, particularly in Africa, information processing, as a science and as a tool, was still a luxury and a status symbol. Neither the government agencies nor the private sector of those countries could afford the technologies and training required to meet the development challenge.

33. Burkina Faso had made considerable efforts in that area. It would pursue its endeavour by modernizing the national telephone network and extending it to the rural areas. With assistance from a universal service fund that had been set up, all departmental administrative centres and other major central locations would be appropriately equipped.

34. Burkina Faso would also extend the network of community telecommunication centres to ensure that a maximum number of people had access to telecommunications and ICTs.

35. However, scarcity of resources prevented developing countries such as a Burkina Faso to join the computerization bandwagon without major problems. To that end, those countries needed the assistance of the international community.

36. Participants in the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), to be held in Tunis in 2005, should try to reduce urgently the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

37. Burkina Faso wished to reiterate its support for the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force, whose work deserved to be better known and should focus more on countries that had the greatest need for ICTs and ICT-related capacities.

38. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan), referring to agenda items 44 and 92 (a) and (b), said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He regretted that rapid ICT advances had accentuated the digital divide instead of facilitating access to ICTs. It was crucial that technology should service the poor by creating an enabling environment for the transfer of technology to developing countries and its use to spur economic growth and development. An efficient and cost-effective way of doing so would be to use ICTs as a strategic tool in pursuing development goals and to enhance the impact of technical cooperation programmes undertaken within the United Nations system and beyond.

39. The United Nations was well placed to harness science and technology to development. By building partnerships with all relevant actors, the United Nations could lead the way in promoting the development objectives of developing countries. The establishment of the ICT Task Force - a representative forum capable of contributing to policy debate and the formulation of strategies on ICT use - had been a step in the right direction.

40. As a member of the ICT Task Force, Pakistan strove to channel the benefits of the global digital revolution to the developing world and ensure its use for attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It would continue to try keep Task Force activities focused on development.

41. The first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva in 2003, had defined a common vision consisting in an information society open to all. WSIS participants had recognized that ICTs where crucial to fostering social and economic development.

42. Pakistan had actively participated in the Geneva phase of WSIS at the highest level, and was looking forward to participating in the second phase, scheduled to take place in Tunis in 2005. It also welcomed the establishment of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) as an important step in the

implementation of the outcome of the first phase and a source of useful inputs to the second phase.

43. Pakistan had adopted a holistic participatory approach to the promotion of ICTs. It had established a National Commission for Science and Technology, headed by the President of Pakistan, and focused on upgrading the infrastructure of research and development (R&D) bodies, creating linkages between industry and the academia and developing a substantial workforce in key areas of science and technology. That dynamic ICT policy had produced an extensive pool of IT skills.

44. Pakistan actively encouraged foreign investment in the telecommunications and software sectors. To that end, it had been put it in place a liberal regime, offering an attractive package of incentives to foreign investors, including 100 percent equity ownership and unhindered repatriation of profits.

45. Pakistan considered the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) as an important forum on a coordinated United Nations system-wide approach to research and training. It commended UNITAR's contributions to meeting the training and research needs of the developing countries. It was, however, disturbing that, while UNITAR provided Member States with free training facilities, the United Nations was not ready to provide UNITAR with rent-free space. Pakistan hoped that during the current session the General Assembly would send a clear signal that the United Nations should provide UNITAR with office space on a rent- and maintenance-free basis.

46. The United Nations University (UNU) was an important institution that - through its research activities - made significant intellectual contributions to the United Nations system. Pakistan appreciated the support extended to scholars from the developing countries as part of UNU development activities, and encouraged UNU to intensify its efforts to meet the training and research needs of developing countries.

47. **Mr. Fasehun** (World Intellectual Property Organization) said that the rapid expansion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) at the end of the twentieth century had prompted extensive scientific and technological changes. Time and distance had been shortened by the ICT revolution, and societies that had previously had occasional access to information through postal services were currently capable of on-line communication. Some developing countries used ICTs to scale the development barrier.

48. ICTs were products of intellectual property. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) was very active in that area and committed to ensuring that the fruits of intellectual property were shared by all.

49. WIPO had launched a number of programmes aimed at bridging the digital divide, including the drafting of the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, which had been adopted by the WIPO member States. The treaties maintained a balance between the owners of rights and the consuming public by allowing countries flexibility in establishing exceptions or limitations to rights in the digital environment. Parties to the treaties could "in appropriate circumstances, grant exceptions for uses deemed to be in the public interest, such as non-profit, educational and research purposes".

50. In 1998, WIPO had launched a digital connection project to link the intellectual property offices of its member States to the WIPO headquarters in Geneva. That project was formally completed in 2003 with the successful deployment of WIPONET to 98 intellectual property offices, and 22 regional workshops had been held to train national intellectual-property office staff in using WIPONET.

51. In the area of arbitration and mediation, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers had appointed WIPO and three other organizations to provide domain name dispute resolution services. Since 1999, WIPO had dealt with over 6,000 cases. Moreover, an increasing number of large and established country code top-level domain names had sought advice from WIPO, while 14 national domain name registries had designated the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Centre as dispute resolution provider.

52. WIPO had made significant progress in automating its services, particularly the Patent Cooperation Treaty process. WIPO had provided automation assistance to 72 of its member States. As a United Nations specialized agency, WIPO had participated actively in all ICT-related programmes, particularly the ICT Task Force and the ECOSOC Working Group on Informatics. WIPO had donated some relatively unused computers to delegations of developing countries, mainly least developed countries (LDCs). Furthermore, WIPO was a member of the

High-Level Summit Organizing Committee of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

53. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda items 44 and 92.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.